

# Veterans' Health

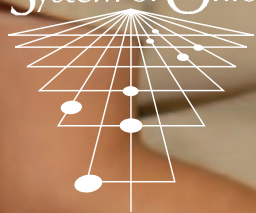
THE WELLNESS MAGAZINE  
FOR OHIO VETERANS

WINTER • 2006

It's a  
New Year—  
get MOVE-ing!

Help for substance  
addiction

VA Healthcare  
System of Ohio



## To our readers



**T**he New Year brings opportunity for a fresh start. What better time than now to renew your commitment to good health?

Our winter issue focuses on helping you make, and keep, healthy lifestyle habits.

Learn about our new MOVE! Program that's helping veterans across the country lose weight. Also find out about special programs that can help you or someone you love conquer a substance addiction.

Best wishes for a safe and healthy 2006!

—Clyde Parkis, Network Director



## About our mailing list

**W**e make every effort to ensure our mailing lists are accurate. If you have questions or would like to be added to or deleted from the list, let us know. Please include your entire address. To make a change, you *must* mail the mailing panel to:

*Veterans' Health*

VA Healthcare System of Ohio

Network Office

11500 Northlake Drive, Suite 200

Cincinnati, OH 45249

*Veterans' Health* is online at

[www.va.gov/visn10/](http://www.va.gov/visn10/). Visit this site to view back issues or subscribe.

## Better ambulatory care—coming soon

**VA** Healthcare System of Ohio is launching the new Chalmers P. Wylie Veterans Affairs Ambulatory Care Center in Columbus. This state-of-the-art facility will be about 295,000 square feet. Representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs along with state and local leaders took part in a historic, groundbreaking ceremony on September 12, 2005.

Benefits of the new center will include:

- more ambulatory specialty-care services, including orthopedics, pulmonary, cardiology, urology and in-house dialysis services
- a greater ability to perform ambulatory same-day surgery
- short-stay beds so patients can rest after having same-day surgery
- an orthotic lab that makes artificial limbs
- a 13-bed dialysis unit for patients who have end-stage kidney disease
- a larger cancer therapy department
- a larger observation treatment area for urgent-care services
- the relocation of the Veterans Benefits Administration to this new center

We expect to open the Chalmers P. Wylie Veterans Affairs Ambulatory Care Center by April 2008. **VH**



## Understanding new prescription costs

**S**tarting January 1, pharmacy co-pay costs will increase from \$7 a prescription up to 30 days to \$8 a prescription up to 30 days. Here's what you need to know:

- If you're in Priority Group 1, you don't need to pay for your medicine.
- If you're in Priority Groups 2–6, you have a co-pay cap of \$960 per calendar year. This means when you reach the annual cap of \$960, you'll continue to receive medicine without making a co-payment for the rest of the year.
- If you're in Priority Group 7 or 8, you don't have a co-pay cap. **VH**

*Veterans' Health* is published quarterly as a patient education service by VA Healthcare System of Ohio, one of the 21 integrated networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The publication is intended to provide information to help you stay well, manage your healthcare and learn about the many health services available through VA. This publication is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, which should be obtained from your doctor. All articles may be reproduced for educational purposes.

### The Mission of VA Healthcare System of Ohio is:

- To provide veterans a continuum of care that is accessible, value-added and cost-effective, and of the highest quality, within an environment of outstanding education and research.
- To promote a culture that supports and develops a caring, compassionate, competent and quality-oriented workforce.

ON THE COVER: MARIE SASSE (RIGHT), NURSE MANAGER/COORDINATOR OF DAYTON VA MEDICAL CENTER'S MENTAL HEALTH UNIT, EXAMINES A PATIENT.

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# Through the eyes of a combat nurse

Staff member Marie Sasse shares her story

**M**arie Sasse isn't shy about discussing her seven months in Iraq as a mental health nurse with the Air Force Reserve's 447th Air Expeditionary Wing. In fact, it helps her cope with the anxieties she's faced since returning home last June.

"Sudden noises still bother me," Sasse says. "And if someone sneaks up on me, my anxiety level rises pretty high. I had a couple sessions at work with a psychologist. He told me what I was experiencing was normal and should subside over time."

Many of the returning veterans Sasse helps daily have it far worse. They're patients in the Mental Health Unit at Dayton VA Medical Center, where Sasse is the nurse manager/coordinator. Many suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and have turned to alcohol or drugs to cope. Some patients have thought about suicide.

Sasse is well aware of the trauma these patients have been through. She worked at an air-staging facility at Baghdad International Airport. While there, she cared for some of the war's most seriously wounded soldiers. She now talks freely about her experience with groups of veterans undergoing treatment at Dayton VAMC.

"I try to get patients to write about their feelings at the Veterans Writing Group we have," Sasse says. "At first, many patients don't want to participate. But once they do, it's like a release—a catharsis—for

## Special services for women vets

**VA** Healthcare System of Ohio understands that women have unique healthcare needs and offers special services to meet them. To learn more about these benefits, contact the Women Veterans Program Manager at your nearest facility listed below.

### Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic

Clary Garabis, R.N., M.S.N., C.D.E.  
614-257-5562

### Chillicothe VAMC

Lee Hopkins, P.A.-C.  
1-800-358-8262  
or 740-773-1141, ext. 6108 or 6062

### Cincinnati VAMC

Sharon D. Parker, M.S.N., R.N., C.S.  
513-475-6984

### Dayton VAMC

Maritha J. Trass, P.A.-C.  
937-268-6511, ext. 1907

### Louis Stokes Wade Park VAMC

Katherine Cooper-Collins, P.A.  
216-791-3800, ext. 3724



**Marie Sasse, a mental health nurse, has helped service members in Iraq and veterans at home cope with the effects of war.**

them." Sasse also tries to get patients to join a support network, such as a family, friends or PTSD support group. These groups meet regularly at each of the medical centers within VA Healthcare System of Ohio.

Sasse's own support network—her husband and 13-year-old son—have been critical to her readjustment. They've helped her see life in a much different way. "After you've been in a combat zone, you realize how precious life is and what's most important," Sasse says. **VH**

# Beating

## There's no better way to start the New Year

**M**ore veterans than ever are struggling with substance abuse. They include returning service members who experienced the trauma of war while serving on the front lines in Iraq or Afghanistan. Veterans often turn to alcohol or drugs to cope with depression, anxiety and other readjustment problems. If you're struggling with an addiction, you owe it to yourself—and your loved ones—to get help.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is prepared to help you. "We have a full continuum of services, including medical detoxification and inpatient and outpatient programs," says Jeff Benware, Ph.D., a staff psychologist at Chillicothe VA Medical Center. "You just need to take the first big step and call us."

### Spotting the signs of substance abuse

Common signs you may need help for a substance-abuse problem are:

- **A loss of control.** You may intend to have one or two drinks but end up consuming five or more.
- **An inability to break your addiction** despite many attempts.
- **More time spent using alcohol** or other drugs.
- **Separation from family and friends** or increased absence from work.
- **Angry outbursts.** You may say things you normally wouldn't while under the influence.

For many veterans, a medical detox program has proven the best way to fight their addiction. "Detox is a challenging process, but it can be quite effective," says Dr. Benware.

If you join a detox program, you'll go through several days of treatment in a medical



# your addiction

unit under the watchful eye of doctors and nurses. You'll receive medicine to ease your discomfort and ensure your safety while you wean yourself from your habit. You may also be checked for underlying problems—such as depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder—and receive treatment for these conditions if needed.

After detox, you can participate in a 21-day Substance Abuse Treatment Program. These programs provide help from social workers, addiction counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists and nurses. VA usually offers these programs on an outpatient basis.

## Making smoking history

Smoking is another dangerous habit that can seriously affect your health. Each medical center within VA Healthcare System of Ohio has a smoking cessation program that can help you break your nicotine addiction. The programs may vary.

At Chillicothe VAMC, help begins with a two-hour session. Here, patients meet with a healthcare team, which includes a psychologist, physician's assistant, pharmacist and registered nurse. "We discuss the dangers of smoking and, just as important, what happens when you stop," says Dr. Benware, who lends support in the smoking cessation program. "No matter what age you stop smoking, you benefit."

At the end of the group session, patients may receive a prescription for a nicotine replacement patch or medicine to help them get cigarette free. Chillicothe VAMC also offers four additional group sessions to help patients learn their addiction's triggers. The sessions also help patients deal with the emotions and anxieties that often arise during smoking cessation.

## Getting help

If you're struggling with an addiction of any type, call or visit your nearest VA medical center and talk to a member of your primary care team. He or she will refer you to the type of treatment that works best for you. **VA**

## Seek help for your stress disorder

**D**o you get easily irritated or have a hard time relaxing? Do you have nightmares or painful war memories? Are you suffering from depression? If so, Louis Stokes VA Medical Center in Brecksville, Ohio (just outside of Cleveland), offers a Center for Stress Recovery. Here, a full range of programs can help you.

"We'll work closely with you if you have gone through a traumatic event and are now showing signs of anxiety or having problems in your life," says Edgardo Padin, Ph.D., the acting director of the Center for Stress Recovery and the chief psychologist at Louis Stokes Wade Park VA Medical Center. According to Dr. Padin, more than 70 percent of veterans enrolled in the Center's programs have seen their lives improve significantly.

Some of the programs the Center for Stress Recovery offers include:

- **A residential treatment program** for male veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. A special team focuses on service members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.
- **Women's Stress Disorder Treatment Program** for females who have gone through any type of trauma—civilian or military-related.
- **Senior Veterans Program**, which treats stress in older veterans who served during World War II or the Korean War.
- **Resilience and Resources Program.** This 10-week intensive psychotherapy program helps male and female veterans of the Iraqi and Afghanistan conflicts. Sessions occur one evening a week and last three hours.
- **Family Intervention Program.** Counselors work with the spouses or entire families of returning veterans who are showing signs of stress.

If you have a stress problem, don't put off getting help. Call the Center for Stress Recovery at **440-838-6055**.



**S**tarting January 3, each medical center within VA Healthcare System of Ohio will offer a new program that's helping veterans across the country shed pounds. It's called **MOVE!** The program combines exercise and nutrition counseling to help patients lose weight and reduce their risk for serious diseases, including diabetes, cancer and high blood pressure. In pilots at 50 VA medical centers, MOVE! helped more than half the veterans who actively followed the program lose weight.

### A growing problem

For many veterans, weight is a major health concern. Some never develop healthy eating or exercise habits. Others may take some types of medicines that can cause weight gain.

About 74 percent of patients who visit VA healthcare facilities are overweight or obese. Health professionals base these conditions on body

mass index, or BMI. The formula measures weight in proportion to height. If you have a BMI of 25 to 29, you're considered overweight and at risk for chronic medical problems. A BMI of 30 or higher means you're clinically obese with a greater chance of chronic illness.

### MOVE! begins here

If your VA primary care provider determines you have a BMI of 25 or more, he or she will ask you to join MOVE! The program offers two treatment levels. At level 1, you'll complete an online MOVE! 23 Questionnaire. You'll answer questions about your weight history, eating and exercise habits and general medical condition. You'll then receive a profile, which will help you and your MOVE! counselor create a personal program for you. You'll receive advice on how to improve your nutrition habits and introduce more exercise into your daily routine. You'll receive brochures suited to

# Get MOVE-ing!

One of the greatest health threats in our country is obesity—and the problem is growing. VA has responded with **MOVE!**—a program to help you lose weight and add more years to your life. Make 2006 the year you get fit. Read more to learn how MOVE! can help you.



your profile that will help you make healthy lifestyle changes. You may also receive a pedometer—a device strapped to your waist that counts the number of steps you take each day.

“We’ll encourage you to aim for a certain amount of steps a day, depending on your weight-management program,” says Deborah Tirpak, R.D., L.D., a registered dietitian and the weight-loss coordinator for MOVE! at Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic. “Once you reach this goal, you’ll strive for another daily-steps goal to maintain your weight loss.”

## Level 2 treatment

After three months, if you need more help losing weight, you’ll move on to level 2. You’ll return to the medical center for group sessions. There, specially trained weight-loss counselors will help you become and stay fit. Nutritionists will talk to

you about the importance of eating regular meals and reading nutrition labels on food packages.

“We also plan to teach you about behavior management,” says Dave Van Winkle, Ph.D., MOVE! coordinator for VA Healthcare System of Ohio. “Perhaps you have psychological issues about food or exercise. We’ll want to explore these issues with you.”

Dr. Van Winkle adds, “We want you to know you’re doing something significant to improve your life.”

For more information about MOVE!, contact your VA primary care provider. You can also visit My Health<sub>e</sub>Vet at [www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov) and click on “MOVE!” to learn more. **VH**

## Eat to your health

**T**hese 10 tips from MOVE! can start you down the path to good nutrition:

- Establish regular meal times and don’t skip meals.
- Switch to skim plus/deluxe milks or regular skim milk.
- Replace high-calorie, high-fat and high-sugar snacks with healthier choices like low-fat yogurt with fruit.
- Eat at least two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables each day.
- Broil, bake, steam, grill or microwave your food. Don’t fry it.
- Drink noncaloric beverages when you’re thirsty.
- Replace margarine or butter with a butter spray.
- Limit sweets to no more than three servings a month. Also read food labels so you know what one serving size is.
- Bring your lunch from home instead of eating out.
- Eat until you’re satisfied, not until you’re stuffed!



# Reaching us is easy

Keep this information handy—when you need us, we'll be there.

## **Chillicothe VAMC**

17273 State Route 104  
Chillicothe, OH 45601  
740-773-1141

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Athens**

510 West Union Street  
Athens, OH 45701  
740-593-7314

## **Lancaster**

1550 Sheridan Drive,  
Suite 100  
Colonnade Medical Building  
Lancaster, OH 43130  
740-653-6145

## **Marietta**

418 Colegate Drive  
Marietta, OH 45750  
740-568-0412

## **Portsmouth**

621 Broadway Street  
Portsmouth, OH 45662  
740-553-3236

## **Cincinnati VAMC**

3200 Vine Street  
Cincinnati, OH 45220  
513-861-3100

## **Ft. Thomas VA Campus**

1000 So. Ft. Thomas Avenue  
Ft. Thomas, KY 41075  
859-572-6202

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Bellevue**

103 Landmark Drive  
Bellevue, KY 41073  
859-392-3840

## **Clermont County**

Eastgate Professional  
Office Park  
4355 Ferguson Drive,  
Suite 270  
Cincinnati, OH 45245  
513-943-3680

## **Dearborn County**

710 W. Eads Parkway  
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025  
812-539-2313

## **Louis Stokes Wade Park VAMC**

10701 East Boulevard  
Cleveland, OH 44106  
216-791-3800

## **Brecksville VA Medical Center**

10000 Brecksville Road  
Brecksville, OH 44141  
440-526-3030

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Akron**

55 West Waterloo  
Akron, OH 44319  
330-724-7715

## **Canton**

733 Market Avenue South  
Canton, OH 44702  
330-489-4600

## **East Liverpool**

332 West 6th Street  
East Liverpool, OH 43920  
330-386-4303

## **Lorain**

205 West 20th Street  
Lorain, OH 44052  
440-244-3833

## **Mansfield**

1456 Park Avenue West  
Mansfield, OH 44906  
419-529-4602

## **McCafferty**

4242 Lorain Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
216-939-0699

## **New Philadelphia**

1260 Monroe Avenue, #15H  
New Philadelphia, OH 44663  
330-602-5339

## **Painesville**

7 West Jackson Street  
Painesville, OH 44077  
440-357-6740

## **Ravenna**

6751 North Chestnut Street  
Ravenna, OH 44266  
330-296-3641

## **Sandusky**

3416 Columbus Avenue  
Sandusky, OH 44870  
419-625-7350

## **Warren**

Riverside Square  
1400 Tod Avenue NW  
Warren, OH 44485  
330-392-0311

## **Youngstown**

2031 Belmont Avenue  
Youngstown, OH 44505  
330-740-9200

## **Chalmers P. Wylie Outpatient Clinic**

543 Taylor Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43203  
614-257-5200

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Grove City**

1953 Ohio Avenue  
Grove City, OH 43123  
614-257-5800

## **Marion**

1203 Delaware Avenue  
Marion, OH 43302  
740-223-8089

## **Zanesville**

840 Bethesda Drive  
Building 3A  
Zanesville, OH 43701  
740-453-7725

## **Dayton VAMC**

4100 West Third Street  
Dayton, OH 45428  
937-268-6511

## **Community-Based Outpatient Clinics Lima**

1303 Bellefontaine Avenue  
Lima, OH 45804  
419-222-5788

## **Middletown**

675 North University Boulevard  
Middletown, OH 45042  
513-423-8387

## **Richmond**

4351 South A Street  
Richmond, IN 47374  
765-973-6915

## **Springfield**

512 South Burnett Road  
Springfield, OH 45505  
937-328-3385

Call Tele-Nurse at 1-888-838-6446. • Visit us online at [www.va.gov/visn10/](http://www.va.gov/visn10/).

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